## VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2014 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

## **SESSION NOTES:**

## **Committee Objective**

The purpose of the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on topics and issues affecting the mutual provision of DEED/VRS and CRP/LUV services to Minnesotans with disabilities. Our efforts to understand issues and to work collaboratively will build and nurture the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance the employment, independent living and community integration of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Specifically, the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will:

- Represent the perspectives and interests of CRP/LUVs in advancing rehabilitation and employment issues while fostering dialogue and engagement on critical issues throughout the greater rehabilitation community
- Promote innovative service practices to accelerate the adoption of best practices at a systems level that fosters equitable access to quality services on a statewide basis
- Provide strategic level advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on matters affecting CRP/LUVs
- Identify key topics and issues affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS
- Consider input from subject matter experts in issues affecting economic development, state demographics / population trends, and promising practices
- Engage in active reflection, spirited discussion and strategic dialogue on critical topics affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota
- Provide a forum for the review and discussion of critical VRS and CRP service delivery topics including, but not limited to: current service delivery practices; new and emerging service needs; identifying best practices; and the consideration of statewide service needs and resources

**2014 Community Partner Members** (listed alphabetically): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Jeremy Gurney, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Dan Meyers, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, and Robert Reedy

VRS Members: Jay Hancock, Becky Johnson, Lori Thorpe, and Kris Tone

Sponsor: Kim Peck, VRS Director

Co-leaders: Chris McVey and Jan Thompson

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

2014 Schedule: Jan 24, Mar 28, Apr 25, Jun 27, Sep 26, Oct 24, and Dec 5.

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## September 26, 2014 Session Objectives:

- \* Provide a forum to discuss and further our understanding of how Olmstead will impact Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation services
- \* Gather advisory perspectives on challenges and strategies for serving people with the most severe disabilities within the mandates of competitive employment and integrated settings
- \* Provide a conduit for sharing relevant, important and timely updates and information for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation community and consumers

**September 26 2014 Attendees** (*listed alphabetically*): Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Heather Deutschlaender, Tyler Foutch, Jeremy Gurney, Jay Hancock, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Dan Meyers, Chris McVey, Kim Peck, Julie Peterschick, Robert Reedy, Jan Thompson, Lori Thorpe, and Kris Tone

Not in attendance: Becky Bazzarre, Steve Brink, Becky Johnson

Guests: John Sherman, Elise Knopf, JoLynn Blaeser

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

## **Agenda Topics:**

- 1. Welcome / Overview
- 2. VR Community Success Story September Storyteller Amanda Jensen-Stahl
- 3. What We Understand About Olmstead

Guest: John Sherman, VRS Extended Employment Program Director

- i. Directives for competitive employment and integrated settings
- ii. Timelines for Olmstead and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- iii. Q&A / Discussion
- 4. Strategic Dialogue: Retooling System Delivery for Community Based Services
- 5. Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics
  - i. CRP Updates
  - ii. VRS Updates
- 6. Wrap Up/Adjourn @ 3pm

## **Meeting Highlights:**

- The committee reviewed and discussed key aspects and implications related to compliance with the Minnesota Olmstead Plan directives and the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- The committee discussed potential recommendations for addressing the challenges posed by the system transformation forces on Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation community.

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## **Next Steps:**

- **DOCUMENT SESSION NOTES:** Documentation and communication of session notes for key audiences including committee, VRS, and CRP/LUV partners.
- OCTOBER STORYTELLER: Tyler Foutch will bring the VR Community Success Story for October
- **NEXT MEETING:** Next meeting is Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Welcome and Opening

The committee approved the June 27, 2014 session notes. Chris McVey announced that with Rachel Praught's departure from the CRP Advisory Committee, she left a vacant seat for partner representation from South & Central Minnesota. Upon review of applications from the last filing for membership to the CRP Advisory Committee, Tyler Foutch from Autism Works was selected to represent the South/Central region. Autism Works is a CRP offering services in south, central and metro regions of the state. Tyler will be appointed to complete Rachel's term which goes through 2015. The advisory welcomed Tyler to the committee.

# \* Committee member Amanda Jensen Stahl provided the September VR community partnership success story:

2013 Participant of the Year: Helen's story

"Never say never. Set your mind and go after what you want," is Helen's motto. It has served her well. Abandoned at three months old, shot in the head as a teen, then abused by a husband for years, Helen is the epitome of a survivor. Seeking a fresh start and self-sufficiency, she was referred to Goodwill-Easter Seals by her Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Counselor out of the North Minneapolis office for services. Through Goodwill-Easter Seal's various employment readiness services and programs, Helen found her voice. She enthusiastically and diligently worked on her communication and confidence, even though she suffers from a traumatic brain injury, aphasia and depression. She expanded her capabilities and experience assisting the building maintenance crew and training in one of our retail stores and then worked with a Goodwill-Easter Seals staff for job placement services.

Helen now works as a housekeeper at a nursing home and continues to work with GES staff to help her maintain and grow in her employment. She says she loves her job and the residents. "I feel like they need me and I need them," she said. Helen also enjoys being a greeter at her church, going to the movies and spending time with her nine children, 28 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Someday, she would like to travel the world."

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#### What We Understand About Olmstead

Kim Peck began the dialogue with a foundational overview of the context and history of the employment services transformation going back to 1997. One of the fundamental premises throughout the evolving legislation is that the standard consideration is based on each individual's position and this requires case by case basis decision making.

## **Employment Services Transformation Historical Timeline:**

## 1997 Final regulations for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program

- 62 Federal Reg 6307, 6311 (Feb 11, 1997)
- Implemented definition of integrated setting
  - Ensuring same level of interaction by persons with disabilities with persons without disabilities as that experienced by non-disabled person in the same/similar job
- Reinforced by the US Senate in 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act

## 1999 US Supreme Court: Olmstead Decision

 Unlawful for governments to keep people in segregated settings when they can be supported in the community

## 2001 RSA Redefines Successful Employment Outcomes

 Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner changes the definition and requirement for successful employment outcomes from including those within non-integrated settings to competitive employment in integrated settings. 34 CFR 361.5(b)(16) Defined as follows:

## **Competitive Employment** 34 CFR 361.5(b)(11)

Work:

- (i) In the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
- (ii) For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

## Integrated Setting 34 CFR 361.5(b)(33)(ii)

With respect to an employment outcome, means a setting typically found in the community in which applicants or eligible individuals interact with nondisabled individuals, other than non-disabled individuals who are providing services to those applicants or eligible individuals, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons.

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## 2005 RSA issues Technical Assistance Circular 06-01 (November 21, 2005)

- Developed to answer the question: "Is a job on the premises of a CRP deemed to be in an integrated setting?"
- Determination must be made on a job by job basis per the level of interaction with persons without disabilities
  - o entire work site
  - o work unit
  - with customers/vendors

## 2009 10-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision

- Department of Justice (DOJ) steps up enforcement of the Olmstead decision to "vigorously enforce the civil rights of Americans with disabilities".
- Range of issues addressed spanning:
  - o nursing facilities
  - board and care facilities / adult care facilities / mental health facilities / intellectual and/or developmental disabilities institutions
  - education
  - o sheltered workshops / segregated day services

## 2012 Oregon lawsuit specifically calls out employment services

- Department of Justice cites Oregon's tracking of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into sheltered workshops as a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Olmstead Decision
- Lane v. Kitzhaber case: the court ruled that ADA and Olmstead mandates apply to the employment setting; not just limited to residential settings.
- "Called out" Oregon VR for failing to serve persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities that are entering vocational services for the first time.

## 2013 MN Olmstead Plan developed by Governor's Subcabinet

- Plan includes three key action items within the Employment section:
  - 1. Expand integrated employment for youth and adults
  - 2. Align policies and funding including adopting an Employment First policy
  - 3. Training, technical assistance, public information and outreach

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## 2014 Final Rule for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

- Published in the Federal Register January 16, 2014; effective March 17, 2014
- States required to submit a transition plan to CMS for all existing programs;
   states must come into compliance within five years of effective date
- Intent of Final Rule: to ensure that individuals receiving long-term services and supports through HCBS programs have full access to benefits of community living and the opportunity to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate
- Mandatory quality of HCBS non-residential employment services: provides opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings to the same degree of access as individuals not receiving HCBS

## 2014 Department of Justice findings in Rhode Island

- Similar to Oregon, DOJ cites Rhode Island for a failure to provide employment, vocational and day services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.
- Consent decree results in a plan to transform the Rhode Island system over 10 years in response to and to address the court's finding.
- Relief to 3,250 people including supported employment to 2,000, 700 in sheltered workshops, 950 in facility based non-work programs, and 300-350 students leaving school

## 2014 Congress signs Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

- Signed on July 22, 2014; effective on the same day. Successor legislation to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. RSA and DOL are developing the implementation regulations.
- Provides "pre-employment transition services" available to eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities. Requires at least 15% of federal funds be used for pre-employment transition services.
- January 18, 2015 notice of proposed rulemaking must be published

Sec.458 (aka 511) on use of subminimum wage:

- No entity (or its contractor/subcontractor) holding a subminimum wage certificate can pay persons with disabilities 24 years or younger a subminimum wage unless:
  - they have received pre-employment services
  - applied for VR and are either
    - ineligible,

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- eligible but not successful, or
- received counseling and guidance focused on competitive employment
- o reviewed every six months for first year; annually thereafter
  - documentation must be reviewed by designated state unit
- This section takes effect two years after the date of enactment of WIOA

Following the timeline overview, Kim stated that there are a number of important items for advisory conversation:

- Section 468 (section 511 in earlier version): as outlined above this section places significant restrictions on the use of subminimum wage certificates to employ youth with disabilities younger than 24 years old in jobs with subminimum wage. This section applies broadly and impacts entities beyond VRS.
- WIOA will require VRS to provide pre-employment transition services to transition youth with disabilities including both required and optional/authorized activities.
   This raises questions as to the role and expectations for schools and counties.
- The legislation mandates that the VR program must set aside 15% of appropriation for these services. VRS is working on calculating the volume of these services currently done. In addition, VRS is working on estimates for what all will be needed to meet the new regulations.
- WIOA is explicitly focused on changing the tracking of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities into sheltered workshops toward employment in the most integrated settings possible.
- Challenges include the current lack of comprehensive baseline data on how many people are being served in non-integrated settings today. VRS can provide the numbers in VRS funded programs however DHS DDS is struggling to develop baseline numbers. It is believed to be a segment of the 16,000 people tracked by the Medicaid services DHS DDS administers.
- VRS maintains a high bar to establish if people are able to benefit from services. In FFY13, VRS had new applications of 7,721, 385 of those participated in extended evaluation of trial work (~5%). Given the potential huge influx of 16,000 people from DHS DDS, the dramatic increase without any additional resources is very problematic and worrisome. While VRS believes it is exciting to be living into the ADA more fully, with three of four service categories closed we are already under serving existing eligible individuals. Adding to this volume, it is not unrealistic to assume that most individuals within the Department of Human Services DTH programs are likely category 1. Depending on how the rulemaking unfolds, VRS may be required to conduct evaluations before any other services. With the new regulations, assessment and evaluation services could potentially consume all VRS resources.

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- Kim explained that in the midst of massive system change, VRS recognizes the broad impacts that Olmstead and WIOA are driving. She noted that VRS prefers to work on navigating and managing all the change together with system partners to reduce the disruption to both service providers and consumers.
- In WIOA, VRS must develop a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with Medicaid.
  Currently there is \$300M allocated to DHS DTH services and \$50M allocated to
  DEED VR services. Discussions around 'rebalancing' of non-integrated dollars to
  fund more of the integrated settings requirements have begun. While the system
  has been moving in this direction since the mid 1990's, Olmstead and WIOA are
  mandating acceleration for compliance. As a system, it is time to step it up.

## Strategic Dialogue: Retooling System Delivery for Community Based Services

## What does this mean for VRS?

- VRS Counselors do not want to become purely "the sorter of eligibility".
   Counselors are passionate about helping individuals clarify their objectives and develop effective plans to achieve their employment goals.
- Extended eligibility cases are often extremely arduous and intensive. We want people to be able to work if that is what they want to do. The process requires three different attempts to determine. If most of staff work shifts to extended eligibility cases, it could become very discouraging and VRS field managers anticipate it would result in the need for some type of staffing 'triage'.
- Another major concern is around the combined emphasis and resources required for pre-employment and transition age youth services. While we fully support the objective of helping more transition youth, we are concerned about the negative impact this may have on the priorities and resources available for services for adults.

# • What does this mean for Providers? Where do crews and enclaves fit into the changing landscape?

Robert shared that while RISE is undergoing strategic planning, the uncertainty of the pending WIOA regulations makes it very difficult to plan. In conversations about resources it seems crucial that concurrent services are needed to migrate from the current model to the new model. Is there an ability to create a Memo of Understanding (MOU) between funding agencies/sources so that the money can 'follow the person' to where they need services. If there are insufficient resources to meet the mandates, we may be setting up a wave of disruptive/destructive impacts to staff and consumers alike. I'm also concerned we may be compelled to shift everyone from placement to evaluation. Olmstead and WIOA will impact every area whether it be Transition, DTH, etc. There are so many pieces to employment services and community integration that it makes it very difficult to plan for the myriad of possible scenarios. If this happens,

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community based assessments will look very different than VR assessments. The transformation occurring in employment services due to Olmstead and WIOA raises many questions: How would we structure those services? How would we staff it? How would we pay for it?

 Heather noted that counties are at various places when it comes to understanding and preparing for the mandates of Olmstead and WIOA.
 Counties are struggling to develop pay systems to address the broad range of needs.

Kim Peck reiterated that compliance with the Minnesota Olmstead Plan requires that multiple agencies including the Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and others are charged to develop a plan that ensures that policy and leadership conversations happen across those agencies and to submit a plan to the Olmstead subcabinet for approval.

The timelines in the draft Olmstead Plan are very ambitious. We are trying to meet and have the conversations that need to happen to develop the best possible information and use good information to make the best possible decisions. There are significant data and information challenges particularly as it relates to DHS.

Julie noted that there they have experienced some hard feelings on the DTH side of their organization that they are carefully working through. There are conscientious staff with 35+ years of service that are taking the mandates for integration personally rather than as a system change. It's helped us to understand the importance of how the changes are communicated to people who have worked so hard for many years with the best of intentions. We're trying to help staff understand that WIOA takes the debate out of it, it's the law and we need to comply.

Many CRPs serve people in multiple counties. Many counties are still learning about all the changes being driven by the Olmstead Decision and by WIOA. In some cases, families are receiving letters about what will be happening effective in January 2015. Many social workers aren't aware of the changes and timelines. With 87 counties, there is a wide variation of response, preparation and readiness levels. As a vocational rehabilitation community, we are worried that we may have people falling through the cracks

Kim agreed with the need for training, outreach and education for what the new legislation of WIOA and the mandates from the Olmstead Decision will mean for everyone impacted. The Olmstead Plan was implemented in a non-funded year with no funding attached. VRS received a small amount the following year to fund implementation however it's far below what is needed to support the system change and transformation work required. John Sherman added that we anticipate an increase in the need for extended employment services connected with the regulations especially as it relates to Transition Youth.

Josh expressed concerns that without additional resources, they will be unable to find and retain staffing. We need enough money into the system to recruit and retain staff for the work expectations and requirements. Robert agreed with Josh's concern and stated

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that they predict within the next 3-5 years, the VR community will experience a crisis level shortage of good quality staff. We are already at the ceiling of what we can pay. Laura expressed added concern with the overall low level of interest in the profession and low enrollment in VR programs. Amanda added that it is already difficult to hire and retain placement professionals and there is no Bachelors degree in Placement. The job requires a wide range of skills and has a high turnover/burnout rate.

## What do CRP members think about the system changes...

## We're excited about being part of this change...

- internally... we're working on a strategic plan for next year, lots of internal change, infrastructure, so many gaps in the information to guide us, Supported Employment, IPS, at every level.
- as a community we need to tackle this together... collectively influence the process, we are trying to be involved with all the key groups including this advisory committee... trying to be part of the conversation to be informed and try to positively influence the process... something we're not doing is to create more 'tables' including DHS, DEED and providers maybe that's something we need to look at. where are providers at the table? it's a missing piece.

#### We want to be 'at that table'...

 huge questions at our organization about what the changes mean and sometimes feels like 'the train has left the station' so we're trying to figure it out, all kinds of work groups trying to figure out the model, we don't have the answers, we have a lot of questions

#### We're not as concerned as some...

 we're getting inquiries from others, working on grants for transition programming for youth with ASD, making forays into the private industry to develop a DISCOVERY like model within a private industry. taking our business to the cloud

### We're talking about the various counties readiness and situations...

- o some counties are dragging their feet while others are on board, finding and preparing staff to do this, readiness is around needing the money needed to get people into the fields and stay in the fields, growth challenges... think that Duluth is going to experience massive expansion...we have 7x the state average populations to serve
- we believe we're in a great spot that is already philosophically aligned with Olmstead and WIOA.
- o let's just help people... go, do, and have good success!

## We've been talking about Olmstead...

- it's the 'large looming thing in the background'... we're confident in the leadership to figure it out, only seeing a few Olmstead looking referrals
- staff are asking if the counties are talking about this and when they talk to county staff it doesn't seem like they are aware, we work with 18 counties

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we are seeing that we need to engage employers in this conversation

## We only do competitive employment in integrated settings...

- trying to stay on top of it, what it will mean to VRS, thinking about the support piece.. how do we staff for that and fund it for job coaching and other intensive supports, looking for opportunities to increase funding through EE, questions around IPS, looking at metro and greater MN,
- expanded our youth services and stepped up our 'Youth Team' that's exciting, trying to understand and be ready to respond, with closed categories what does that mean to us,
- our leadership team has met with the Olmstead Implementation Office's Director, Dr Zengara to ask questions... asking questions such as will we have to change our services, understanding our supports may look different

## We're working with our metro counties...

- one county is just starting to talk with their social workers about this, nothing yet from another county
- staff can feel under attack when their areas are being restructured to anticipate the changes, seeing a need for more job coaching, six new placements for DTH and that means more need for job coaching, those folks will be transferred to LT case managers, we're gaining some staff from other departments

## The spirit of Olmstead is what our organization was built on...

- Olmstead is congruent with the vision of our CRP's founder, we believe it provides us a great business opportunity, we're consulting for the feds and in other states.
- we're also seeing other states who are levying a fine/penalty on their human services agency in order to fund the transformation by moving the funds currently being devoted to 'segregated services' to more integrated services;
- option of the provider to continue their services if they want however they will not be receiving reimbursements, majority is DHS impacted while VRS has lesser in liability. DHS is also using crews and enclaves in conflict with RSA's requirement of integrated settings. How do we go from A to B? Minimum wage can be difficult to come by for different production rates.

## We work with 35-65 ages, we don't do transition youth programs...

we're talking about Olmstead changes in Extended Employment and may require some modifications in what we do, we have others sitting at other tables for employment and residential programs, strategic planning is approaching and we're waiting for mandated minimum wage of \$10.00/hr, we have individuals that cannot produce at that level - what do we do to address that ...

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we're already a competitive employer in the top 25 janitorial companies in Minnesota, we have a certificate but we don't necessarily use that certificate, definition and interpretations of 'integrated employment' and what it should look like and what it is, we do night shift work. what happens to the individuals that don't fall into any of the categories? our employees are integrated within the communities who have the skills. looking at IPS and more individualized services going forward.

## We're continuing to set goals for our referrals and talk about all our services...

- we're meeting with our RAM to redesign our services, working to help both our staff and our counties, our direct staff are anxious and asking 'am I going to lose my job'... we're trying to help them understand what we're looking for, we're specifically targeting more DTH business to help move them, we're sitting on multiple boards,
- we're exhausted by the volume and rate of change that's hitting us, we're really growing in Mankato and we are being contacted by employers, we're having them in for brown bag discussions and talking about how we can work together, trying to hire staff who can market and are skilled in the work we do,

#### We're concerned about counties and Olmstead...

o counties are not hearing about nor understanding what Olmstead is about

## Our staff and services are spread out and very different across the region we work...

- we are constantly working on staffing and the mix of staffing we need for our populations, different offices are approaching things differently, several DTH programs are struggling to digest what it means and what it will look like, how do we attract and retain the range of services we need
- o family conversations very interesting dynamics based on Olmstead. even though we haven't taken in new sheltered employees into our programs for years, there are parents of long term sheltered employees who winter elsewhere who want their children to be in a sheltered 30 hrs/wk experience. the changes facing our field include changes these families weren't expecting.
- we're in a quandary with the 'crew' question; previously tried to get rid of crews and now seeing it as a possibility for some situations; we're doing some envisioning work to find a place for the full range of people and desired work.
- counties we work with most are mostly on board with community based employment however there are county case managers that still like the in-house option - it's an element that has to be discussed and addressed.

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Upon hearing the various perspectives of the CRP advisory members, Kim said the system needs to be given the opportunity to take steps to 'get there' from the current state to the state envisioned by ADA, the Olmstead Plan and WIOA. VRS needs the voice and active support of the providers and the consumers to ensure resources and time are invested to refine and rebuild where needed. She asked the advisory members for their thoughts on how VRS can help CRPs to get more actively engaged in adding their input, experience and influence into the system. Jan noted that the combined efforts of DHS and VR agencies is complex and important. Redirecting the state monies to the mandated services means gaining the willingness to get the entire vocational rehabilitation community to move forward and bringing along the families and guardians in the process for a successful transformation to occur.

## Advisory recommendations for next steps:

- 1. Support for a new 'Table' that enlarges and increases the conversation among service providers with key entities such as Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) (to include Transition). Facilitated conversation of representatives from the key system members including VRS (DEED), DHS and CRPs to understand and influence the changes to minimize the potential for disruption/degradation of employment services and to optimize alignment of policy, implementation and funding efforts. Engaging DHS is vital to the change's success.
- 2. Continue efforts focused on gaining more information and hopefully coordination on the messaging that is coming out from other agencies and hitting providers
- 3. More planning to prepare for the 'sudden switch on July 2015' to mitigate the huge impacts to both staff and consumers
- 4. More exploration of the issues and supports necessary for moving from noncompetitive employment/non-integrated settings including crews and enclaves role in transitioning services 'from A to B' toward competitive employment in the most integrated settings as desired by the consumer.
- 5. Agreement that this is challenging and hard work AND it is also really important work. These laws provide the power to create greater opportunities for positive impact with people with disabilities and their communities.
- 6. When we think about DHS... we need both Mental Health and Disabilities areas of DHS at the table, we need to think about both transition youth and adults.
- 7. DHS/DDS may be our best way to strengthen county connections and prepare counties for the changes. Many counties are in waiting mode to see what this will mean.
- 8. While it is important for DHS to address their processes impacted by the Olmstead ruling, DEED should focus adequate resources on 'taking care of VRS and DEED liabilities first' before helping the system/DHS.

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## **Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics**

## CRP updates:

- Heather Deutschlaender
  - ProAct Inc. has hired a new Employment Manager position responsible for VR, EE and training services. Referrals are up for services, with 42 referrals and 22 in progress
- Dan Meyers
  - Opportunity Partners has hired a director for Certified Learning Platforms.
     The DTH Cooperative that was launched by Opportunity Partners and RISE Incorporated is off to a great start. The cooperative is modeled after the success of the Minneapolis Placement Partnerships.

## Robert Reedy

- RISE, Incorporated has completed their CARF visit and it was their best evaluation ever with one recommendation that has already been addressed. Next they are undergoing IPS Fidelity visits for expansion to three in metro and three in non-metro.
- Currently close to making a decision on a new case management system.
   Looking at KPIs and dashboard updates and enlisting the entire organization in the process.
- Robert has taken on the added responsibility of the TBI program.
- There is a 'New Sector' intern focused on increasing business engagement and analysis. The effort is anticipated to run one year and the best practices will be shared with all participating CRPs.

#### Julie Peterschick

- Productive Alternatives is completing an Office 365 update. Still working on ABE. The adult day program is not up and running yet as they are reviewing the location viability relative to the Olmstead ruling to ensure that if the program is connected to our site it will be deemed legal.
- IPS is going in Wadena. Still struggling to get drivers for Perham to connect employees and employers. Conducting IPS Fidelity review to establish the baseline.

## Laura Bealey

- MRCI Mankato has opened their new 'East Park' facility for DTH programs.
   The site has ~33,000 square feet.
- IPS Fidelity review baseline in October related to their first candy business.
   Currently redesigning outcome measurements.
- o CDS Client Directed Services is building a new adult day program.
- Laura has been working on staff appreciation week and it has helped the management team to understand that everyone really needed to recharge!

## VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2014 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Important to recognize the need for recognition for the hard work and pace that is people are working at.

#### Amanda Jensen-Stahl

- Goodwill Easter Seals hosted Senators Al Franken and Tom Harkin in July.
   Goodwill Easter Seals was featured as part of the WIOA effort and highlighted for their IPS and disabilities programs and their work with community education for worker credentials
- October 7th they will host a career fair in their Fairview office. 22 employers are confirmed so far and will be onsite interviewing and hiring.
- Jeremy Gurney
  - Opportunity Services is going through CARF visit.
  - They are expanding services into the state of Massachusetts.
- Josh Howie
  - Trillium Works! is happy to report that both supported employment and VR referrals are up to normal levels again. The Duluth area is at an incredible 3% unemployment which increases the employer demand for our consumers.
  - We have restructured our organization and doubled the management team to support and lead the growth.
- Tyler Foutch
  - Autism Works is also seeing an increase in referrals. We have designed a self advocacy page to assist those still on the waiting list.

### ❖ DEED/VRS updates:

Jan Thompson, VRS Field Director

Updates on Minnesota's VR Community program status and outcomes: Both activity and outcomes are coming in strong.

- 1. VRS has surpassed our employment outcomes goal of 2,763 and are currently at 2,822 with more to be counted before the end of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which is September 30, 2014. We are thrilled! We recognize many factors contributed to this successful community outcome including a revived economy and job opportunities as well as improved partnerships and collaboration.
- 2. Overall employment average wage is \$10.99 per hour. Our average number of weekly work hours is 30 hours.
- 3. Thanks to the re-allotment dollars we have been able to help 300 of 800 individuals off the Waitlist and hope to move the remaining individuals off the Waitlist by end of October.

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## Important Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

- The Minnesota Olmstead Plan and the newly enacted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are driving an intensive, comprehensive review of employment policy and practices for the entire system providing services for people with disabilities in our country.
- VRS is committed to working with partnering public agencies and CRP providers to identify the core components of integrated settings and the current range of those services to actively support continued transformation of employment services within the system in alignment with the Olmstead and WIOA directives around competitive employment in 'the most integrated setting'.
- The CRP Advisory Committee will continue to provide strategic perspective and insights to DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services on the experiences of CRP staff and consumers during the transformation of the vocational rehabilitation system throughout Minnesota.
- As convener, VRS will look to the CRP Advisory to help anticipate and respond to the mandates in a way that helps each system member to provide services that meet the spirit and the letter of the governing mandates. It will not be easy work. We are committed to working collaboratively to address and resolve the barriers and to create a stronger VR community across the state for the benefit of those we serve.